The Maritime Unions

I. S. U.—N. M. U.—S. U. P.: plus I. L. A. (east)—I. L. A. (west); plus teamsters and warehousemen. A caldron of labor for Commissioner Kennedy to stir.

"You can put me in jail. But you cannot give me narrower quarters than as a seaman I have always had. You cannot give me coarser food than I have always eaten. You cannot make me lonelier than I have always been."

SEVERAL decades ago Andrew Furuseth, a gaunt Norwegian-born sailor, spoke these words when he was slated for jail because he was trying to drive the crimps off the San Francisco waterfront. They have echoed through marine labor ever since. They have been mouthed by heavy-set leaders who took over the International Seamen's Union of America, which Furuseth helped build, without his idealism and his simple habits of life. They are being shouted by young rebel leaders who regard old Andy Furuseth today as the unfortunate tool of the shipowners. They have lived because they say something about seamen, maritime unions, and what life aboard ships does to man's psychology that no other sentences so exactly communicate—namely that when you deal with marine workers you are dealing with men as independent as any in the ranks of American labor.

You are dealing, in fact, with the true proletariat of the Western world, the homeless, rootless, and eternally unmoneyed. You are dealing with men who have no stake in the system beyond this month's voyage, who have been all over the world and seen none of it beyond its dull ubiquitous Sailortowns, who have become a part of it nowhere. Four out of five of them have no wives and three out of five have no addresses. They are tough, knowing, and free, and they look at you from behind some scorchingly eloquent spokesmen, the strongest of whom will be presented to you shortly. Meanwhile there is scarcely a shipowner in America whose dreams are not troubled by the latest reverberations of Furuseth's words.

Over a year ago the big I. M. M. intercoastal liner *California* could not leave San Pedro for three days because a young sailor named Curran engineered one of the first notable U.S. sit-down strikes. Since then there have been at least 300 "quickies" in East Coast ports alone, and their causes have spread out past such trifles as the absence of Worcestershire sauce in the crew's galley to the much more wasting and complex matter of interunion rivalries. Secretary Cordell Hull, sailing for the Inter-American Conference, was detained in port eight hours because Munson's *American Legion* could not get enough sailors belonging to the right union. The *Oriente* (one of whose completed voyages is described on page 117) has had to cancel one full sailing to Havana and postpone several others because of jurisdictional disputes. The memory-laden Fall River Line, after repeated interruptions, was scuttled by its owners (the New Haven Railroad) in July because they said they could not afford the union demands. No port captain has felt certain his crew would work until he has seen the vessel actually at sea, where a sit-down is a mutiny. And the alarmists among shipowners are not too certain even then. As they see it, the dependable "business unionists" they have dealt with for years are suddenly replaced by Communists, anarchists, and a militant rabble. A well-fed agent of Lloyd's, in New York this summer, described American seamen generally as "a ragtime lot" and thanked God the British tar still understands the disciplinary tradition of the sea. The American shipowner, if he thanks God at all, does so only because the whole problem, which is by all odds the most pressing in the merchant marine, has been dumped by act of Congress in the lap of Joseph Kennedy.

The Maritime Commission is authorized to investigate and set minimum wage and manning scales and reasonable working conditions for all crews on all vessels that receive a government subsidy. But Joe Kennedy, a realist, knows that he has more than a fact-finding and rate-setting job to do. He is already sizing up the four gifted, temperamental, power-wielding leaders of American maritime labor without whose compliance no decrees of the Commission are likely to keep the peace. They are the sardonic Australian, Harry Bridges of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Association (West Coast); tall, smiling Harry Lundeberg of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific; the experienced, reactionary, heavy, fast-moving Joe Ryan of the International Longshoremen's Association; and flaming Joe Curran of the National Maritime Union of America (eastern division), who once had a maddened seaman sink an ax between his shoulder blades.

Now the unions these men head by no means include all American maritime workers, nor are all their members by any means

AN OLD-LINE LABOR LEADER SMILES UNDER FIRE

David E. Grange, West Indian native, has for years been a high official in the A. F. of L.'s Marine Cooks and Stewards Union. He is now under heavy fire from the Left wing, where C. I. O. partisans charge he uses a "tin-box system" of accounting for the many thousands that annually flow through his union's treasury. Grange feels that the A. F. of L.'s request for his resignation is rank ingratitude to a faithful servant who has kept the trust.

directly subject to the decisions of the Maritime Commission. All told there are something like 100,000 workers on American deep-sea, lake, and coastwise vessels, of whom some 10,000 are licensed officers. The deck crews number some 25,000. There are some 45,000 in the stewards' department and about 20,000 in the engine rooms. Of the grand total, probably not more than 20,000 work on ships eligible for subsidy, to which the Maritime Commission's jurisdiction is limited. But seamen wander like nomads from ship to ship and even from flag to flag; they compare notes on wages, food, and working conditions almost as thoroughly as they discuss women. Therefore the Commission will in effect set up an unofficial standard for 100,000 American seamen.

In "Seven Seamen" on page 121 FORTUNE *presented a small sample of U.S. maritime labor, representative of that great revolt against old-line unionism that is called the rank and file. Here, in "The Maritime Unions," the vital relationship between labor and the Maritime Commission is outlined in terms of four strong men—Bridges, Lundeberg, Curran, and Ryan—whom Commissioner Kennedy must face.*

Work on a vessel is complex enough, and every special occupation has its own organization. But when you come to the alliances and feuds between ship and shore workers, the union setup becomes a labyrinth. For cargo is brought into port by seamen; it is unloaded from the ship by longshoremen; it is piled into temporary shelter by warehousemen; and presently it is hauled away by teamsters. Each of these groups has its union, and all of them affect the seamen's unions. The whole chain is no stronger than its weakest link, whether you test it as an exasperated employer or as a militant union head. Because a jam at any point can stop the flow of cargo in and out of an entire port.

Look now for a moment at the pattern of this chain, as the union men have linked it. On the Pacific Coast you find sea and shore workers allied in a Maritime Federation, which comprises 8,000 members of Lundeberg's Sailors' Union of the Pacific, together with 17,000 members of Harry Bridges' International Longshoremen's Association, plus about 17,000 more members from nine smaller unions. But Lundeberg and Bridges currently are following different policies and are not friendly. On the East Coast you find the 35,000 members of Joe Curran's new National Maritime Union. Curran and Bridges are taking the lead in organizing a National Maritime Federation and are allied with John L. Lewis's C. I. O., of which Harry Bridges is West Coast leader. Not allied with the C. I. O. are Furuseth's old International Seamen's Union with the remains of 50,000 members; and Joe Ryan's 60,000 longshoremen. The net result of all this is a criss-cross tie-up between seas and shores of both coasts—Bridges' West Coast longshoremen being allied through the C. I. O. to Curran's East Coast seamen, while Ryan's East Coast longshoremen are linked through the A. F. of L. not with Lundeberg's independent West Coast sailors (it would be too perfect a pattern), but with Beck's West Coast teamsters. A third crosshatch links West Coast sea and shore workers in the Maritime Federation of the Pacific.

Now suppose that the East Coast I. S. U. for good or bad reasons strikes the Bull Line, with which it has had an agreement. It does not thereby necessarily tie up the ships, unless Mr. Ryan's longshoremen recognize the strike and refuse to unload them. Such a strike would not be a direct concern of the Commission, but it suggests the relationship of seamen and longshoremen and the complex situation the Commission must consider. Or suppose on the West Coast that a ship manned by what Joe Curran's

MARITIME LABOR YIELDS TO GAS AND SAN FRANCISCO POLICE

Pickets in 1934 fought with fists, bricks, and clubs, but finally wavered before clubs, guns, tear and vomiting gases. Two pickets were killed. So angry labor called the General Strike.

eastern seamen consider scabs, carrying cargo that Joe Ryan's East Coast longshoremen did not consider "hot" when they loaded it, docks to be handled by Mr. Bridges' West Coast longshoremen who consider it "hot." Or suppose, as was the case in Seattle, you have a setup where the teamsters (A. F. of L.), who must haul cargoes inland from the piers, are at odds with the longshoremen (C. I. O.) about which union shall have jurisdiction over the warehousemen. Such presumptions have been realities in the past, or may become so in the near future. Thus the Maritime Commission, in setting wages and conditions for seamen on subsidized ocean ships, is automatically involved in a net of union feuds and alliances at their bitterest season.

In the past Commissioner Kennedy has had great success in bringing rivals together. He has soothed the angry brows of movie magnates who would scarcely speak to each other. He welded starry-eyed reformers and spluttering Wall Street operators into a smoothly working unit. But now Mr. Kennedy and Commissioners Woodward and Moran, who deal directly with labor, face a new dilemma. For can the labor leaders control their men? Suppose they are given fair wages and working conditions in the subsidized merchant marine; will they strike in sympathy with some remote inland battle between the C. I. O. and the A. F. of L.? Or walk off a lot of newly built, clean, and comfortable ships to aid a strike of ill-fed, badly paid and housed coastwise sailors who envy their high standard? One answer to this was proposed in the Bland-Guffey bill, which would have set up compulsory arbitration of maritime labor disputes through an independent commission. But Joe Curran denounced it at the House hearing. When Commissioner Kennedy announced briefly that his Commission also opposed it, the bill died.

Otto Hagel

STORM POINT OF THE 1934 LONGSHOREMEN'S STRIKE IN SAN FRANCISCO WAS CONTROL OF THE HIRING HALLS

When hundreds of hands stretched out for every job, the company's hiring bosses could give jobs to men who bought them drinks, slipped them cigars, or were willing to kick back a part of their earnings. Two major strikes, in which seamen's unions joined, gave longshoremen's unions a dominant voice in supervision of a new system of hiring halls, where plug boards (above) now ensure that jobs will be equally spread among union members.

Painting by Joseph Steig

A QUIET AFTERNOON ON THE BEACH

Not a strike, but the kind of minor disturbance that happens daily when maritime workers get restive. This quickly settled "quickie," which briefly ruffled Old Dominion's otherwise unbroken record of placid labor relations, was caught at its fleeting prime by Artist Joseph Steig's brush.

Sometimes one seems to see, in Commissioner Kennedy's random utterances on maritime problems, almost a rhythm of purposive timing. Before representatives of 42,000 workers assembled in Portland June 7 for a convention of their Maritime Federation of the Pacific Coast, Mr. Kennedy had quietly observed that ". . . the men . . . must be loyal and disciplined . . . there can be no excuse for costly and bitter factionalism . . . from every sort of fanciful and irresponsible cause." And again, when he was about to plunge into those seventy-three days of bargaining with the twenty-three ship operators, he was talking vaguely of the possibilities of government ownership. And more recently, when the unions were about to air their grievances before the Commission, Mr. Kennedy appeared to go into another period of dejection over the difficulties of his job, to mention, in words of well-chosen ambiguity, that the naval reserve might be forced to take over the merchant marine in case of strikes.

But Mr. Kennedy in general keeps his own counsel. And if he looks a little warily at labor, the sailors return his gaze with even greater wariness. Because labor can give good reasons for counting on its unions for good wages rather than on governmental commissions. Before the War able-bodied seamen's wages were between $30 and $35 a month. But by 1920, when the International Seamen's Union had been built to 66,000 members, the wage was $86. Presently the shipowners and the Shipping Board smashed the I. S. U., which by 1931 had dwindled to 15,000. And wages were about $61.50. Then came an increase in union membership, and this year, following the strike, wages went up to $72.50. While the big sag of the twenties reflected post-War deflation, the wages of the well-organized railroad workers dropped only 11 per cent and then began to climb. But the seamen's cut was only slightly restored. So labor cherishes its right to organize and strike, and views the interposition of governmental machinery as a fascist move. At the N. M. U. convention Joe Curran warned dramatically: ". . . if we don't wake up . . . we will find that we have been legislated out of business or into the navy!"

YET, as with many of Mr. Kennedy's enterprises, a paradoxical air of reassurance rises simultaneously with a sense of foreboding. While this convention was in session the Todd shipyard workers were on strike, and suddenly there was introduced (and passed) a resolution demanding the removal of Kennedy from office because, as owner of 1,100 shares of Todd stock, he was an interested party. What the delegates did not know (and their strategists were not in the hall) was that Mr. Kennedy had called attention to his ownership of this stock (held in trust for his children) before he accepted the position, and that the Senate by special resolution had exempted him from the provisions of the law covering such cases. When the convention's board of strategy wandered back into the hall and discovered this resolution they sprang to action. Telephones buzzed in Washington, and someone was presently on the floor explaining the case. In a few minutes the convention unanimously rescinded its resolution demanding Kennedy's scalp. Labor does not want to make a snap judgment on the man whose measure it has not yet taken. And after the Commission opened its

Courtesy of "N. M. U. Log"

SAILORS' NEW LEADERS

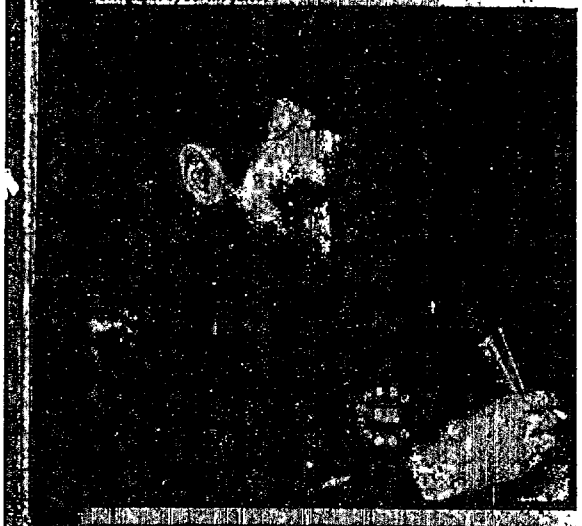
An unknown East Coast sailor in 1936 led his mates in a sit-down strike aboard ship in a West Coast harbor, asking pay and working conditions equal to those that western sailors had got through their strike. Secretary Perkins promised amnesty but Secretary Roper dubbed them mutineers. The owners fired sixty-four, touching off a sailors' strike from which unknown Joe Curran (left, foreground) emerged as leader of an East Coast rank-and-file movement. Joe is a Catholic, and communism is against his religion, but Joe Curran finds Communists make loyal members of his National Maritime Union of America. On the West Coast Left-wing Harry Lundeberg (below) rose to leadership in the Sailors' Union of the Pacific during the 1934 strike, led them out of the A. F. of L. in 1936. But this summer the young rank-and-file leader couldn't decide about the C. I. O., wanted to be sure of S.U.P. autonomy. Lundeberg's syndicalist leanings make him wary of political tie-ups. Instead he would rely on strong, militant unions, which will squeeze the shipowners and capitalists and make them lose dough."

Wide World Photo

hearings in New York, Joe Curran gruffly admitted: "This is the first time the seamen have ever had a chance to say what they really think at one of these things."

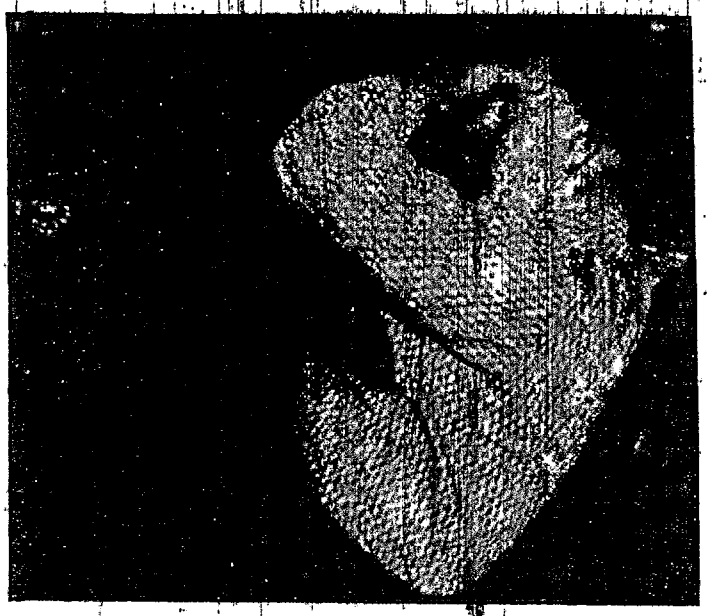
At the hearings sailors rose to tell, in pungent phrases, of fo'c'sles so crowded that men of naturally clean habits presently crawled with vermin, of toilets connected with messrooms, of garbage piled five feet high in companionways, of bunks where sheets are changed hardly once a month. They told of ships that sold their hospital beds for passenger space, so that sick or injured members of the crew had to be cared for in the fo'c'sles, of crews paid off in I. O. U.'s instead of wages. ". . . on the ships running on tropical voyages," said V. J. Malone of the Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders, and Wipers Association, "one of the first essentials is a wooden awning over the crew's quarters, because of the fact that the men can't sleep down below, it is just like an oven, so they just get up on deck and sleep there . . . On passenger ships they just stay below and swelter and curse and sometimes they sneak up on deck and sleep on the hatches. It is a very bum arrangement, pardon the expression, but it is a very, very poor arrangement." "I am not a judge of the quality of food," said Joe Curran modestly, "I have seen a duck that looked pretty good from the outside, and when you put a finger in him he fell apart. I have seen that happen, and the same thing with beef, it looks good on the outside, but once it hits the icebox aboard the ship it usually falls off the hook and starts to walk away." "I have made voyages," said William Gallagher of the International Union of Operating Engineers, ". . . to India, laying at Kidderpore docks, eighty miles up the Hooghly River, where the temperature would be 120°. It is impossible to live in the quarters of these ships, you cannot sleep in them; pitch is coming out of the seams on deck, and any amount of fans will only stir up the hot air. I have also, in the same type of ship, made a voyage up to the North Sea, the northern regions of Russia, and up in the Murman's Peninsula, where the fog seems to be frozen and the moisture is collecting, sheathing the sides of the ship, forming a film of ice on the side . . ."

The Commissioners, above these somewhat muted echoes of innumerable beach and fo'c'sle conversations, heard more than a fierce resentment against accumulated wrongs. They could hear an overtone of the pride men take in enduring a poor and dangerous life they cannot love, and a cynically suppressed hope that this time they may get a break—suppressed because they have been rolled too many times on shore to believe it. The four strong men who lead these workers reflect this hope and cynicism. Two of them are leaders of sailors' unions; two of shore unions. The shore unions may be the sailors' allies, or they may join other labor factions against them, according to the drift of the greater controversy between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O., of which this maritime struggle is a crucial salient. Each of these four men has been spotlighted by the dramatic rise of maritime labor since NRA. The high points of their lives tell the story in almost chronological order. But remember that it is not a story of dynamic leaders only. The waterfront is littered with burnt-out dynamos: leaders who lost touch, who



TWO LONGSHOREMEN

On the West Coast you can find men who might fight if you denied that Harry Bridges (left) is the Jesus Christ of the maritime labor movement. This Australian Left-winger rose to leadership in the 1934 strike, avidly reads economics, is no Communist but welcomes them in his union, can hold crowds spellbound with his stark logic, draws a $75 weekly salary, is currently a West Coast power for the C.I.O. His nominal chief has been Joe Ryan (right), who holds the East Coast longshoremen in line for the A. F. of L. and would argue that he earns his $15,000 salary by keeping them working steadily (i. e., no sympathy strikes) at wages that are higher than the West Coast scale. Even Joe Ryan's enemies concede that he is in pretty close touch with his men. He likes the food at Cavanagh's.



miscalled the turn, who allowed themselves to be bribed, flattered, or wheedled into policies that ran counter to the temper of the masses for whom they spoke. Remember that it was the tide-like masses of sea and shore workers who made these names emerge. And now let us look at them.

Bridges: who looked into lost faces

WHAT the kid never forgot was the look on the faces of the restless crowd that milled all day in front of the jail where Australia's ruling classes had locked up Big Tom Walsh. Big Tom was the voice of Australia's working class, many of whom could not see the War and said: let imperialists volunteer to fight imperial England's battles. Big Tom had made a speech during the 1917 strike. The Tories didn't like Wartime strikes and they didn't like Big Tom, so presently he was behind bars and the rangy kid in his late teens with the eyes and nose of a hawk who stood on the curbing that day caught the lost look on the faces of that leaderless crowd. And he didn't go into his conservative father's real-estate business. Anyway he had been reading Jack London's surf-drenched tales of the class struggle, so presently Harry Bridges signed on for the first of many voyages. In 1920 he was sailing out of San Francisco, which has since been his legal residence. In 1922 he left the sea to work cargo on the waterfront. For twelve years his story was that of any other longshoreman. He married, they had a daughter, and Harry had a couple of not too serious injuries due to faulty safety conditions. He hated (but had to join) the Blue Book Union and also the hiring halls, often run by proprietors of waterfront speakeasies whose owners gave work to men who spent the most money, or were willing to kick back part of their wages.

But there were differences. For silent Harry Bridges was reading—books on labor, economics, sociology, with perhaps a look into Karl Marx. And as a crack workman he was usually a member of a star gang—the shock troops of the waterfront comprising the quickest workers who got the easiest hatches, made sometimes $50 a week compared to a $10 or $12 average for the others.

By 1932 the docks were restless; depression had frozen West Coast shipping and idle factories spewed thousands of unemployed onto the waterfront to compete for cargo-handling jobs; and along the Embarcadero the hawk eyes of Harry Bridges looked into the sullen faces of another leaderless crowd. Presently there sprang up the anonymous *Waterfront Worker* and pamphlets, which passed from hand to hand as men read on blurred mimeographed pages their own hatred of the company hiring boss. The printed word gave them courage and silent Harry Bridges began to find his voice. In 1933 under the Blue Eagle's protective wings they swarmed into a real union, A. F. of L.'s International Longshoremen's Association, and began calling for action. At a rank-and-file convention (Harry Bridges' voice was louder now) they demanded full union control of hiring halls, better wages and conditions. When these were refused the situation drifted into the 1934 strike. Sailors poured off each arriving ship to join the striking longshoremen, for men were reaching out for that same kind of unity that was preached in Harry's books. Presently sea and shore workers formed a Joint Marine Strike Committee of the rank and file under Harry Bridges' chairmanship, each union agreeing not to make separate peace until the other's grievances were settled. But more allies were needed, and presently Chairman Harry Bridges was thumbing automobile rides out to the union halls of outlying truck drivers' locals, telling the sea and shore workers' story until the truck drivers, over protests of their old-line leaders, voted not to haul cargo from the docks during the sea and shore strike. Joe Ryan came on from the East, with a mind so open he was sure he could see everybody's side as he sat down in the mayor's office facing the owners. There he signed an agreement to settle the

[*Continued on page 132*]

Seven Seamen

[Continued from page 122]

himself, and bread. The fo'c'sle where he bunked was crowded, dark, and close. So when he heard about the strike, he jumped the ship in Marshfield, Oregon, and beat it up to Portland in a boxcar. In Portland he promptly got a thirty-day suspended sentence for attacking a scab, which made it necessary for him to leave the city. Thereupon he went to Seattle, where he picketed fourteen to sixteen hours a day, tossed rocks at the engineers and firemen who tried to move freight along the waterfront, and greased the railroad tracks so that the engines couldn't move. From a woodworking factory he helped to steal 300 clubs that had just been turned out for the police and vigilantes. He was gassed and clubbed frequently and lost all his upper teeth in a fight with a scab. Then one day in downtown Seattle he met the man who had knocked out his teeth, and in an attempt to break a bone for every tooth he had lost, he battered the scab so fearfully that he was afraid to stay in Seattle. The remaining month of the strike he spent on veteran's relief in Portland, doing nothing to excite the attention of the police.

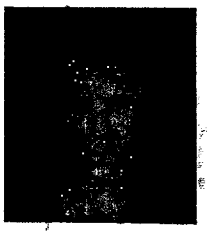
Ed Darling is proud of his strike activities. No strike, he points out, ever did so much for the seamen as the strike of 1934. The tin plates, the rotten grub, the crummy six- and ten-man fo'c'sles, he says, are disappearing fast. But there is still plenty to beef about, "for there are crates in the U.S. merchant marine that should have been scrapped ten years ago." Ed Darling doesn't hold any grudge against the owners for fighting the men because he thinks capital and labor have got to fight. But he hates the "thieves and pimps and racketeers" who do the owners' fighting for them, and the "scab-herding outfits like the American Legion."

When he sails as freezer—and he usually does—Ed Darling rates as a petty officer, and as long as the refrigerating plant is run smoothly on a ship, he isn't bothered by the engineers. He eats with the officers, sleeps in a room with another freezer or the deck engineer, and earns $125 to $165 a month. He hasn't much to complain about. But as long as he has been going to sea, Ed Darling has been fighting for better conditions and he figures that if you don't have good conditions at the bottom, you're not going to have them long at the top.

Ed Darling is short and heavy-set. On the third finger of his right hand he wears a tool-steel ring with a heavy signet, which is a very effective weapon in a brawl. Ordinarily he is well equipped with funds, for he does a lot of gambling while at sea and is pretty consistently lucky. Most of his funds go for women and whiskey, but he spends a good deal on the opera and symphony concerts. He has been enthusiastic about music ever since he was a child, and he has never missed an opera or a symphony whenever there was one available while he was in port. His favorite reading is the music criticism of Olin Downes, Lawrence Gilman, and Marcia Davenport, and when the Metropolitan appealed for funds in 1933 he subscribed $50.

Ed Darling joined the National Maritime Union in June, a month after it was organized. During the 1936-37 strike he was oiling on the army transport *Republic*, which was not struck. He became a member of the union as soon as he was paid off. He hasn't any doubt that there are plenty of Communists among the officials and he's glad of it. Communists, he says, keep out grafters and they work hard at organizing. The only trouble with them, he says, is the fact that their tactics during strikes are often bad—like parading a bunch of men who never went to sea up and down the waterfront with signs saying down with everything. Ed Darling is hopeful that under "Roosevelt capitalism" labor and capital will reach some kind of bargaining arrangement. Until that happens, he's going to go on slugging finks whenever he meets them and joining strikes whenever they're called.

Blackie Fernandez—A. B.



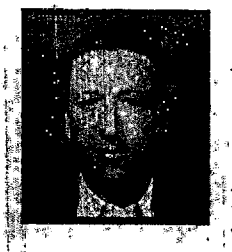
William Samuel Fernandez started to sea in 1928 because he had "ramblin' in his blood." Born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1906, the son of a Bull Line fireman, Blackie bogged down in the fifth grade of grammar school, worked for a while at a paper-bag factory and at a woodworking plant, and finally joined the Marine Corps. As trumpeter with the Marines, Blackie spent most of his four-year hitch in the Orient, where there wasn't much to do except "drink and doh with the ladies." After his discharge from the Marine Corps in 1927, he signed on a Bull Line collier at Norfolk as deck hand, worked up to A. B. in 1929.

BLACKIE FERNANDEZ has done most of his sailing in colliers, towboats, and freighters running up and down the East Coast. He likes to travel coastwise because it gives him a chance to see his mother now and then. Blackie's mother is being supported by his brother, who makes pretty good money as a clerk on the Chesapeake & Ohio at Richmond ($25 a week, Blackie figures), but she suffers from diabetes and Blackie is afraid to go on a long trip for fear something will happen to her while he's away. Besides that, Blackie's trips to foreign ports haven't been very successful. When he was down in South America with the Grace Line, he got in a mix-up with the Valparaiso police and was thrown in jail for disorderly conduct; when he was in Puerto Rico with the Bull Line, he skipped a ship for a girl named Maria, and then four months later was almost carved up by her before he could make a ship back to the U.S. ("All them girls carry Gem razors wrapped in handkerchiefs," Blackie says, "and if they catch you running out on them, they'll cut you to pieces.") And when he was on the west coast of Africa with the Barber Line, Blackie got involved with a French girl who had, he says, "everything in the book."

Blackie is short, dark, and soft-spoken. His father, who has been in the marine hospitals of Norfolk and New York for the past seven years suffering from a brain tumor, is of Spanish descent; his mother is "one of the Cumbers of Henrico County, Virginia." Blackie rarely dresses in anything but dungarees and a denim shirt, and when he pays off a ship, he likes to get together with a couple of friends and go out to the nearest jungle with a gallon of liquor. "In the jungle," he says, "you can drink and sing and dance, and you don't have no trouble with the law." At various times since he was in the Marine Corps, Blackie has been tattooed. Since tattooing is valuable as identification, he can describe his "pieces" in detail. When he describes his three nudes (upper right, lower right, and lower left arm) he is careful to point out that "the naked lady on the lower right arm has a strip from her belly-band missing and her right tit cut off." The rest of his nudes, along with the cupid on his chest, the dagger on his upper left arm, the Chinese dragon and Red Cross nurse on his lower left arm, and the Marine Corps emblem on his lower right arm, are in fine shape.

Blackie has been a member of the N. M. U. since it started. He used to belong to the Marine Workers' Industrial Union and remained a member until it was disbanded. He joined after hearing a delegate explain that the M. W. I. U. was the only union that would work to bring about better conditions. That was in 1932, and conditions, Blackie says, "were very poor." The mattresses were made of straw and the linen was changed once a month. The fo'c'sles were small and congested. The toilets and washrooms were combined, and the only way to take a bath was in a bucket. The food was usually terrible. And on the coastwise run Blackie was almost asleep on his feet from working overtime battening down the hatches, cradling booms, and stowing gear. Now with wages up and overtime being paid for at seventy cents an hour, he thinks that things are a whole lot better. And if conditions get bad on a ship today, he points out, the men can pull a "quickie" and get their grievances adjusted.

Al Rodick—oiler



Alfred Rodick went to sea in 1927 after holding a job as electrician in a hotel for a couple of years. Al was foot-loose in San Francisco at the time: his mother had died five years before, when Al was in the eighth grade; his father, a longshoreman, had been dead since 1910. The job at the hotel paid $80 a month and board, which was pretty good money for a twenty-one-year-old kid, but Al wanted to see the world, so he signed on the lumber schooner Point Sur as wiper and headed for New Orleans.

AL RODICK'S opinion of all the ships on which he has sailed is uniformly critical. On the *Point Sur*, he says, you busted your fists on the bulkhead if you yawned in your bunk; on the Pacific Argentine Brazil Line's *Emergency Aid* they had a habit of expecting men to work for nothing, and the oilers had to spend four hours on deck with the winches and stand their watch below as well, because the company didn't pack a deck engineer; on the Lykes Bros.' *West Camak* the engine frequently broke down and the ship spent thirty days getting from Rotterdam to New Orleans—a trip during which everybody got on everybody else's nerves and the cook shot the bos'n for messing around his girl; on one of Moore & McCormack's ships, which he describes as a floating junk heap that had been two years under the

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sea before she was salvaged, there were so many bedbugs that they practically hauled the bunks out in the alleyways; on the *Robert Luckenbach*, "a hungry bitch," the food was mostly beans and the milk was thin and there wasn't any night lunch; on the Seas Shipping Corp.'s *Robin Gray*, where he never saw an egg or a piece of butter, breakfast was liver and onions all the time, the sailors characterized the coffee as a combination of chicory and saltpeter, and they served so much pineapple on the way back from Honolulu that the crew broke out in a pineapple itch; on the Chas. Nelson Co.'s *Caddopeak*, where the black gang bunked with the sailors, you couldn't sleep because the sailors were always getting up to tie up or let go ("they slept with a cargo hook in one hand and a heaving line in the other"); and on the lumber schooners you couldn't see anything but the masts, you didn't stop long enough in port to buy a newspaper, you slept on straw mattresses, and the cook fed the crew "like Jesus on a couple of eggs."

Al Rodick is squat, tough, and good-natured. But he doesn't like finks and he doesn't like engineers. The finks he doesn't like on principle; the engineers he doesn't like because they're a "god damned bunch of punks who take more interest in the company than the owner does." Al is a member of the Pacific Coast Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association, which is still part of the I. S. U., principally, according to Al, because it gives the Maritime Federation of the Pacific a chance to get at the A. F. of L.'s funds. During the strike of 1934, Al did picket duty in San Pedro and had his head broken a couple of times. And as one of the rank and file who swung the strike, Al thinks the East Coast's National Maritime Union is all wrong in taking in members who didn't participate in that strike. "A fink," he says, "is a fink, and all you can do is sock him." As a former member of the Communist party, Al has an air of authority when he discusses the Communists: "They are," he says, "a bunch of opportunists and they don't give a good god damn about getting better conditions." Al doesn't like the idea of affiliating with the C. I. O., either. John Lewis, he thinks, was probably sent in by Green to wreck industrial unionism—which, he says, is a fancy name for the old I. W. W.'s One Big Union theory. The fact that the workers got too strong under vertical unionism for Lewis or anybody else to wreck the C. I. O., is, according to Al, no recommendation for Lewis, who was "a labor skate when he started and will be a labor skate when he finishes." Al feels that the Wobblies know more about running strikes than anybody else in the world. Communism, he says, is politics; the I. W. W. is unionism.

Between ships Al has worked as a ferryboat fireman in Seattle, as a bartender in Baltimore, and as a porter in New York City. He'd like to work ashore now but he has never been able to avoid telling the boss where to head in. "You always know you can grab a ship," he explains, "so you don't take nothing from anybody." Al is all for manning U.S. ships with 100 per cent American crews. "Give a spick a job, and he'll get his cousin a job, and he'll get his brother a job, and before you know it the whole crew is spicks, that won't kick against conditions because they never had any better." Al describes himself as a one-tripper. "If they want men to stick with a company, they'll have to change conditions." He is also a heavy drinker, since there isn't much else a sailor can do when he comes ashore. As for love, Al says he wants to do with a woman just what the owner does—the difference is that he does it faster.

Seven Seamen

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Snooky McKune—bos'n

Howard McKune went into the merchant marine in 1916 as an A. B. on the steam schooner William H. Murphy. *He was able to sign on as an A. B. because of a previous four-year hitch in the navy, which he still regrets. The son of a Brooklyn longshoreman, McKune was born in 1890. He has sailed on upwards of thirty ships since he signed on the* William H. Murphy, *and for the last ten years he has generally sailed as bos'n.*

SNOOKY McKUNE says he wouldn't give a plugged nickel for the whole U.S. merchant marine. He claims that there are ships still in service with hulls so thin that "if you lean on them hard you'll fall in the drink." Twice, he says, he has been on ships whose bottoms have fallen out under the weight of the engines, and he has been on others that had plates "patched with adhesive tape to keep out the water." "Safety at sea is a lot of——," says Snooky.

A good many people ashore, according to Snooky, know that the fo'c'sle is supposed to contain 120 cubic feet of space per seaman, but they don't know that this amount of space has to accommodate lockers, bunks, and sailors' gear. His main objection to the average fo'c'sle is the lack of ventilation. On the U.S. Lines' ships, on which Snooky has sailed most frequently in recent months, the food is good, but on the Panama Pacific Line the food, he says, is lousy. On some of the lines, he claims, incoming ships transfer their surplus food to outgoing ships, no matter what condition it's in. "Anything to save a nickel on the men." Bed linen isn't changed very often on any ship, says Snooky, and on the Morgan Line a set of sheets has to last for eighteen days. But the worst of all in the estimation of Snooky is the Bull Line, where food, fo'c'sles, and working conditions are all what he calls "strictly stinkeroo."

Snooky joined the I. S. U. in 1917. He dropped out for a couple of years after the 1921 strike because he was disgusted with the way the union officials had sold out the men. Then, because "there wasn't any other union," he became a member again, but when the rank-and-file movement got under way in 1934 Snooky said the hell with the I. S. U. During the spring strike of 1936 Snooky picketed along the North River waterfront and in the 1936-37 strike piloted a picket boat called the *Duck*. Between trips in the *Duck*, Snooky found time to send a couple of finks to the hospital.

Snooky is sure Joe Curran isn't a Communist, and he is equally confident that the majority of N. M. U. members aren't Communists either. "We don't want no —— Communists and we don't want no —— fascists.'" Although he's sure President Roosevelt is for the workingman, he thinks Secretary of Labor Perkins "smells," and he calls Secretary Roper "a phony bastard that ought to be choked." "Put him and me in the same room," he says, "and I'd come out, not him."

Snooky is thickset and walks with a slight limp. He weighs 167 pounds and stands five feet seven. His arms are covered with tattoo designs of anchors, snakes, and shamrocks; on his right leg is the inscription, "Death before dishonor," and on his right foot a pig, rampant. "Like all sailors," Snooky likes to drink but he says he never gets to the point where he doesn't know what he's doing. He has never been on the beach more than a month except during strikes. He has never married because he "can't even keep" himself. He doesn't like whores, but he patronizes them anyhow. "You got a swell chance of getting a nice girl when you're in port maybe two or three days." As for the future, Snooky hopes to go right on sailing A. B. or bos'n and having "the best —— time" he can.

The Maritime Unions

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strike. But when the rank and file found it was a separate peace for longshoremen, without union control of hiring halls, they booed their International President from a mass-meeting platform on which Harry Bridges sat. Presently the owners and the San Francisco officials moved to open the port.

On July 5 police advanced against the picket lines and as the men with eyes streaming from tear gas wavered and gave way before the guns, clubs, and blue coats of civil authority, police stormed Rincon Hill, which overlooked an idle waterfront. Freight was moved that "Bloody Thursday" but at a cost of two dead pickets. And that night the National Guard moved in. But San Francisco labor was deeply stirred when thousands marched with bared heads behind the biers through the business district. Flowers came from everywhere, but Harry Bridges said they returned without thanks the ones sent by the police. San Francisco labor now overwhelmed its old-line leaders to jam through the Central Labor Council a call for a general strike, and by July 17, 127,000 workers were reported idle. San Francisco was frightened; her newspapers stormed against subversive aliens and Harry Bridges' hawk eyes and nose and long spidery arms rode a Red-scare wave in the nation's press.

Under pressure (and weariness) the general strike crumbled. Sailors and longshoremen went back to work pending arbitration, which finally gave longshoremen control of the hiring halls. But the strike had also given sea and shore workers a feeling of unity that Harry Bridges quickly moved to cement. From the nucleus of the Joint Strike Committee he

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welded a Maritime Federation of the Pacific—under the leadership of a young rank-and-file sailor, Harry Lundeberg—which stood the shock of a second strike, "The Hundred Days" beginning October 30, 1936. But Harry Bridges was still driving for unity. If sea and shore can be united, why not both coasts? Meanwhile the C. I. O. was rising as a power in the land, with Harry Bridges soon to be its most fervent West Coast disciple.

If the 1934 strike gave this silent man his tongue, it gave West Coast rank-and-file labor a focal point for trust. It might have been one of fifty others, but you can raise a storm out there by saying, as one man did, that after all "Harry Bridges is not the Jesus Christ of the labor movement." And why does this storm rise? Maybe because Harry Bridges can stand up and say, without flourishes, ". . . we as workers have nothing in common with the employers. We are in a class struggle, and we subscribe to the belief that if the employer is not in business his products will still be necessary, and we still will be providing them when there is no employing class." Maybe only because he says, "Always stay close to the masses," and practices it down along the waterfront where they buttonhole him on politics, domestic wrangles, or how to get a job.

While his outlook is in many ways Marxian he is no Communist, and he slapped a libel suit against a newspaper for implying that he was an alien provocateur of revolution. But he hews a straight line toward his goal, veering sometimes into what employers can see only as a maddening opportunism. He favored "quickie" strikes after 1934 as a means of building a compact Maritime Federation and enforcing working conditions. This achieved, he signed a pact outlawing "quickies." When asked what assurance he could give that he would observe this better than the previous one, he said with disarming frankness, "I didn't mean it then, but I do now." Now that the union has been built, the men want steady work, and "quickies" are an obsolescent weapon. Thus lean Harry Bridges hammers forward toward industrial and political unity of labor. That is one of the men with whom Commissioner Kennedy has to deal.

Lundeberg: the Northman

THE thing to remember about Harry Lundeberg is something he may not know about himself. Which is that the Northmen seldom got far from shore. Their boats swarmed down on the Roman Empire and harried the Middle Ages. But rarely did they go more than a day's march beyond their boats.

Smiling, blue-eyed Harry Lundeberg is a true Northman, born in Oslo, Norway, in 1901. He first shipped out of Oslo at fourteen and has sailed under nine different flags, belonging wherever possible to a sailors' union, including a Spanish one with syndicalist leanings. In 1923 he arrived in Seattle, out of which port he sailed until two years ago. Like Bridges, Lundeberg rose from his union's rank and file to leadership during the 1934 strike, even going so far as to oust its old-line head and be cut adrift from the International Seamen's Union. After the strike, Bridges picked the young Left-wing sailor to lead the new Maritime Federation of the Pacific, which was to link sea and shore workers. But it early became apparent that Lundeberg's real interest was with his sailors, so presently he resigned to devote his time to them.

Resting the elbow of one tattooed arm on his table, smiling Harry Lundeberg might first tell you that he is "yoost a sailor," and then, continuing, explain that he believes in syndicalist principles of action—strong economic action and no political action at all. Now a syndicalist, in case you need to brush up on the doctrinal differences of Left-wing politics, is a kind of Red. But very different from Marxian Reds—Communists, Socialists, and the like—whom syndicalists regard as reactionaries, with both feet in politics and only half an eye on the world revolution. The world revolution, syndicalists believe, can come about only through strong trade unions that will "squeeze the shipowners and capitalists and make them lose dough," to take a phrase out of Harry Lundeberg's mouth. So the syndicalists say the hell with politicians who, if you rely on them, will surely sell you out.

When his seamen's organization broke with the A. F. of L., Harry Bridges, whose slogan is always "unity," tried to patch the breach. Bridges' goal, until recently, was to build a militant rank-and-file movement within the A. F. of L. shell. But Lundeberg was content to let his independent Sailors' Union of the Pacific drift just off the shore—keeping its valuable links with the longshoremen but for the rest standing aloof, watching events. And one that he viewed with mixed emotions was the rise in 1936 of the C. I. O. He approved of industrial unions. But he wondered if the C. I. O. did not have too strong a political tinge, perhaps a setup for centralized power, a general tang of dictatorship from the top. Yet the rip tide of rank-and-file labor toward the C. I. O. was tugging Lundeberg's sailors, who in a referendum poll voted heavily for affiliation, the returns from which smiling Harry Lundeberg ignored as he left for the stormy five-week Portland convention of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific. Harry Bridges was there with a resolution that would immediately have affiliated the Federation with the C. I. O. But Lundeberg's forces substituted for it a provision that each union vote separately on the question. Bridges lost this point perhaps because, as his C. I. O. supporters claim, their group of unions did not have voting power at Portland in proportion to their numbers. Or maybe because Bridges left for Washington to confer with John L. Lewis on matters of major C. I. O. strategy.

Or possibly because the smiling Northman refuses to be tied until he knows just what it offers his sailors. He wants to be sure the C. I. O. provides autonomy for a militant leader with syndicalist leanings. He must be certain that it will not draw his sailors into a skein of alliances stretching far inland, which might start vibrating with strikes led by "Communist reactionaries," in which Lundeberg and his sailors have no interest.

Or maybe because of his Northmen ancestors, who feared to raid far from the beach, whose carved boats usually ventured only a little way up even the broadest rivers.

Curran: it looked like another job

THIS Portugee had just killed a man lying in his bunk and none of the other fellows of the watch were anxious to go down there in the half-dark, so it looked like a job for Joe Curran. Joe went down all right but he couldn't see the Portugee had an ax. Somehow down there in the half-dark the Portugee got on top of Joe before he could do anything about it and chopped Joe twice in the back—deep, too; you can still see the slashes made by this Portugee's ax. But you've got to be tough in the merchant marine. Joe remembers one South African run when seven of the boys died. It was some kind of fever. When one of them took down they would give him a quart and a fistful of quinine pills, and send him to his bunk. Either he would polish off the quart and be up and around in a few days, or the off watch, going down there, would find he was dead and then they would drop him over the side. Maybe this is why Joe Curran, who reads a lot, doesn't like sea romances. "I've *been* to sea," says Joe. So mostly Joe read stuff on world economics and labor he could get out of ships' libraries or pick up ashore. He was expelled from the seventh grade in Westfield, New Jersey, "for not attending regular." At fifteen he was office boy for Gold Medal Flour in New York and watching the ships go by was too much. So he signed on as an ordinary seaman and started seventeen years at sea, during which Joe Curran read a lot, saw more, and picked up several bullet holes and three breaks in his nose.

The way Joe Curran got into unions was like this: in order to sign on the *California* in the winter of 1935 he had to join the International Seamen's Union but even then he didn't think much of it. "Their officers were not seamen's officials but shipowners' agents," he explains. He didn't like the *California* either. The boys were already sore about the grub and the hours, and when they docked at San Pedro and found out how much better wages and conditions the West Coast boys were getting as a result of their 1934 strike that finished it. But they didn't know what to do, so they turned to Joe Curran and Joe sat them all down on the job. He told the owners' agents the *California* would not move unless they gave the boys West Coast pay and conditions. The papers made quite a thing of it and pretty soon they told Joe that Washington, D. C., was calling him on the phone. It was some lady's voice explaining that if the men would take the *California* back to New York there would be no discrimination and a hearing of their grievances. The lady was Secretary Perkins. But when they docked in New York the owners fired sixty-four of them and the papers said Secretary Roper had called them mutineers.

That started the rank-and-file strike in the spring of 1936, when the boys started walking off East Coast ships (while the old-line officials of the I. S. U. joined the shipowners in wringing their hands about violation of existing contracts) demanding reinstatement of Joe and the *California* crew. And what if some Communists did agitate for the walkout? Let them come along, so long as they go the right direction, Joe's boys will tell you. That strike dwindled. Or rather, it seemed the sensible thing to do to go clean the fat boys out of their nobby I. S. U. offices—get some fellows in who had recently slept in buggy forecastles, knew what it was to stand watch, and would do something. But it wasn't easy. The fat boys had written the union constitutions and they ran the elections; so pretty soon there were two sets of officers—insurgent and old guard—and if Joe's boys didn't know what shipowners could be like, they would almost have been sorry for them—what with strikes everywhere and a picket line across almost every gangplank.

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That fall there was another walkout, called by Joe Curran's rank and file, in sympathy with the West Coast strike, but pretty soon at mass meetings they began pushing demands for West Coast pay and conditions for themselves, and though the rank-and-file faction claimed that 90 per cent of the seamen by this time were paying dues into their treasuries, the old-line brass collars set up headquarters to supply scab crews against the rank-and-file strike. So pretty soon Joe made the break clean, forming the rank and file into a new National Maritime Union of America, and the rank and file could gloat that the old-timers were left stranded with little under them but their swivel chairs and their titles certified by the A. F. of L. But there was someplace to go after the break, for in John L. Lewis and Harry Bridges, Joe Curran's East Coast rank-and-filers found men who talked their language. At N. M. U.'s constitutional convention in New York in July, they voted to join the C. I. O.

Big, rangy Joe Curran has been called a Communist so often that he has developed calluses in the proper places. Now he only grins wearily and tells you that he isn't; he goes to mass and it's against his religion. But that all political parties are welcomed by the N. M. U. At mention of Commissioner Kennedy, Joe Curran is drily noncommittal. He thinks he will get along all right. But there is a brief silence as he stares seriously into space, thinking of the brisk, pleasant-faced ex-Czar of Wall Street. A silence as one quick-minded, hard-hitting Irishman across the barbed wire of the class struggle, sizes up another.

Ryan: he might see it as a business

PHYSICALLY, Joe Ryan might be the star line plunger of your college class attending its twentieth reunion. His powerful shoulder muscles have softened from less strenuous use and slide easily through thin layers of fat. Perhaps this as because Joe Ryan, President of the International Longshoremen's Association and a tower of strength in the A. F. of L., likes the good food at Gavanagh's.

And why should he not? Joe Ryan draws a salary of $15,000 per year from the I. L. A. and how he wants to spend it is rather definitely Joe Ryan's affair. If you suggest that he is the head of a "business union," Joe Ryan will not cringe. He doesn't like political ones. And maybe keeping your men at work at wages higher than the West Coast Left-wingers get—without pulling them off the job in sympathy strikes—maybe it *is* just a business. But the men seem to like it, although some point to the West Coast's superior working conditions. Steady old Joe Ryan has been able to run it that way without calling in Communists or syndicalists, without scaring the uptown folks with a lot of wild talk about a coming revolution. If Joe Ryan's enemies could write him off as just another A. F. of L. fathead up in a swank office, things would be simpler for Left-wing labor. But even his opponents concede some points on Joe Ryan, admitting he is in touch with his men. He still goes down to the waterfront to talk things over with them. And he still has them out to his house for dinner.

There may have been times when things slipped through Joe's stubby fingers. Such as when he went out to the West Coast during the 1934 strike and signed that settlement in Mayor Rossi's office that the rank and file repudiated. But since then he has been watching the young rank and file and has picked up a trick or two. At a recent conclave of A. F. of L. higher-ups, he came out flatly for a house cleaning of the International Seamen's Union under A. F. of L. auspices, suggesting that it could be improved by the resignations of some of the union heads who had lost face with their men. Of all the I. S. U. officials, none has been under heavier fire from the Left-wing than David E. Grange, the smiling native Jamaican (shown on page 123) who heads I. S. U.'s Marine Cooks and Stewards. Asking his removal in court, auditors for Left-wingers have shown that of $108,000 collected by this union, only $49,804 found its way to the bank, and have branded its bookkeeping as a "tin-box system." And William Green has chosen Joe Ryan of the longshoremen as one of several to conduct an I. S. U. house cleaning. Beyond this they make plans for a rejuvenated I. S. U. headed by Old-liner Ivan Hunter, which could join with the East Coast longshoremen in an A. F. of L. federation of sea and shore workers like that which the Left-wingers have out on the West Coast.

Beneath the C. I. O. trumpets of the new rank-and-file movement, the A. F. of L. still preserves bulwarks of great strength in the maritime-labor picture. In general it is favored somewhat by the inertia, still more by the innate conservatism of the American workman. Specifically, the A. F. of L. can count on sturdy Dave Beck on the West Coast, without whose teamsters no prolonged longshoremen's strike could be won. And in the East there is always steady Joe Ryan, who has kept his longshoremen in work at top wages, and who still goes down to the waterfront to visit with his boys—after a pleasant dinner at Gavanagh's.

Red?

NOW that we have looked at their leaders, how far Left are the new rank-and-file groups that control the seas of both coasts and the shore in the West? There is no reason to doubt the denials of Lundeberg, Bridges, and Curran of their personal membership in the Communist party. Nor the fact that Bridges and Curran both tell you their unions are open to men of all political faiths, and that Communists make good unionists. Nor the fact that both see eye to eye with the Communist party on some points of strategy—particularly its plan for building a strong, class-conscious system of democratic unions. Old-liners like Joe Ryan will lean back in their swivel chairs to explain sadly that the N. M. U. is now controlled by the same disruptive gang of Communist organizers whose only interest in joining any union is to raise hell and whom the I. S. U. counts itself well rid of. Go up to the N. M. U. hall, they tell you, and you'll see that same old disruptive C. P. gang pounding the typewriters. Joe Curran, they concede mournfully, is a good boy who got a swelled head after he got his name in the papers over the *California* sit-down. The C. P.'s are using Joe for a front: Joe doesn't know what it's all about.

But the ordinary seaman—the rank and file's backbone—just how far Left is he? Listen along the waterfront, or in on the fo'c'sle bull sessions of the off watch, and you get as many opinions as there are sailors—plus a few unified trends. Most will tell you they don't like the Coms—the screwy Union Square crowd with their banners and slogans. Russia? Sure. They've got the right idea there, some of these sailors will tell you. They did a job in Russia. But it will never get done here by the Union Square crowd. Yet the Coms up at N. M. U. headquarters (which might be half its staff although a small fraction of its membership) are something else again, the sailors say. Smart boys. They're going where we want to go right now—democratic unions with a firm tie-up to shore workers. The Coms, they say, are fighters: they've got ideas on strategy and they keep their noses clean on money.

But the American sailor has sized up the world for himself from the waterfronts of Leningrad, Hamburg, Liverpool, Shanghai, Barcelona, and Buenos Aires. No Communist with a mimeograph is going to do his thinking for him. What he wants right now is "conditions" and he expects to get them through a strong union. He is still militantly American, so they must be American conditions. He won't eat the swill they pass out at mess call on British boats. He laughs at the pay of Japanese sailors. He won't sleep sixteen in a room as they do on the spick boats. Because "bedbugs can spread syphilis," which is an angle to overcrowded fo'c'sles that few stockholders have considered. He will gladly accept the help and advice of the Coms so long as they are pointed at better conditions at sea via strong democratic unions. But when he gets them, if they try to pull him off the boat in wild sympathy strikes with causes he does not care about, that is another matter. Joe Curran is in charge up there, N. M. U. sailors will tell you. Joe is an American. When Joe can't get along with the Coms, Joe will kick them out and we'll stand back of Joe.

The N. M. U.'s Left-wing leaders vehemently deny they have any immediate purpose beyond building a strong, class-conscious union. Because much windy optimism has leaked out of the Communist party since the rosy days following 1917, when Lenin and Trotsky were sure the world revolution would eventually come around Mr. Hoover's immediate corner. It's a long, tough job, they now confess. Building well-disciplined trade unions is only the first of many steps. Meanwhile they must play ball with the profit system, which means Left-wing unions that not only can pull a 100 per cent strike but will abide by a fair settlement. And what they say is borne out by what they tell the sailors via their busy mimeographs. Along with attacks on race discrimination and appeals for aid to the workers of Spain, the leaflets preach discipline. *Beefs And How to Settle Them* is widely circulated. And the way is not by pulling "quickie" strikes on the job. But take up your beef with the ship delegate. If he can't settle it, he will take it up with the union at the next port, which will recommend action if the owners won't listen to the shore delegate. The leaflets point out that owners and old-line labor leaders charge that the new union is irresponsible. They preach that "quickies" may have had a place in the stormy days of organization, but those days are passing. So take up your beefs with the union delegate, the leaflets command. In the N. M. U. office where they like to talk in slogans, they might call this revolutionary discipline and working-class order. But down on the waterfront, the sailors call it just horse sense. If you want to build a strong, responsible union.

Which the sailors do.